

Instead of a moratorium, we should eliminate Common Core in Connecticut.

We send our tax money to Washington and they use it to control our education?

This curriculum came

From Washington and not from the governors of the states. Why would

Washington be enforcing it otherwise?

It is NOT better than what we had before. Two prominent educators involved in Common Core would

Not sign off on it and believe it will put our students behind globally.

A diminished emphasis on literature in the secondary grades makes it unlikely that American students will study a meaningful range of culturally and historically significant literary works before graduation. It also prevents students from acquiring a rich understanding and use of the English language. Perhaps of greatest concern, it may lead to a decreased capacity for analytical thinking.

Indeed, it is more than likely that college readiness will decrease when secondary English teachers begin to reduce the study of complex literary texts and literary traditions in order to prioritize informational or nonfiction texts. This is because, as ACT (a college entrance exam) found, complexity is laden with literary features: It involves characters, literary devices, tone, ambiguity, elaboration, structure, intricate language, and unclear intentions. By reducing literary study, Common Core decreases students' opportunity to develop the analytical thinking once developed in just an elite group by the vocabulary, structure, style, ambiguity, point of view, figurative language, and irony in classic literary texts.

It will be hard to find informational texts with similar textual challenges (whether or not literary nonfiction).

An English curriculum overloaded with advocacy journalism or with "informational" articles chosen for their topical and/or political nature should raise serious concerns among parents, school leaders, and policymakers.

Common Core's standards not only present a serious threat to state and local education authority, but also put academic quality at risk. Pushing fatally flawed education standards into America's schools is not the way to improve education for America's students.

—Sandra Stotsky, *Professor of Education Reform at the University of Arkansas, was formerly Senior Associate Commissioner at the Massachusetts Department of Education and in charge of the development of the state's widely praised English Language Arts standards. Their heavy emphasis on literary study is considered a major reason for the Bay State's first-place scores on NAEP's reading tests. For further details, see the recent report by Mark Bauerlein and Sandra Stotsky, "How Common Core's ELA Standards Place College Readiness at*

SANDRA STOTSKY WOULD NOT SIGN OFF ON COMMON CORE.

There's no better illustration of Common Core's duplicitous talk of higher standards than to start with its math "reforms." While

Common Core promoters assert their standards are

"internationally benchmarked," independent members of the expert panel in charge of validating the standards refute the

claim. Panel member Dr. Sandra Stotsky of the University of Arkansas reported, "No material was ever provided to the

Validation Committee or to the public on the specific college

readiness expectations of other leading nations in mathematics” or other subjects.

In fact, Stanford University professor James Milgram, the only mathematician on the validation panel, concluded that the Common Core math scheme would place American students two years behind their peers in other high-achieving countries. In protest, Milgram refused to sign off on the standards. He’s not alone.

Professor Jonathan Goodman of New York University found that the Common Core math standards imposed “significantly lower expectations with respect to algebra and geometry than the published standards of other countries.”

Under Common Core, as the American Principles Project and Pioneer Institute point out, algebra I instruction is pushed to ninth grade, instead of eighth grade, when it is traditionally taught. Division is postponed from fifth to sixth grade. Prime factorization, common denominators, conversions of fractions and decimals, and algebraic manipulation are de-emphasized or eschewed. Traditional Euclidean geometry is replaced with an experimental approach that had not been previously pilot-tested in the U.S.

Ze’ev Wurman, a prominent software architect, electrical engineer, and longtime math-advisory expert in California and Washington, D.C., points out that Common Core delays proficiency with addition and subtraction until 4th grade and proficiency with basic multiplication until 5th grade, and skimps on logarithms, mathematical induction, parametric equations, and trigonometry at the high-school level.

I cannot sum up the stakes any more clearly than Wurman did in his critique of this mess and the vested interests behind it:

I believe the Common Core marks the cessation of educational standards improvement in the United States. No state has any reason left to aspire for first-rate standards, as all states will be judged by the same mediocre national benchmark enforced by the federal government.

Moreover, there are organizations that have reasons to work for lower and less-demanding standards, specifically teachers unions' and professional teacher organizations. While they may not admit it, they have a vested interest in lowering the accountability bar for their members. . . . This will be done in the name of 'critical thinking' and "21st-century" skills, and in faraway Washington, D.C., well beyond the reach of parents and most states and employers.

This is all in keeping with my own experience as a parent of elementary- and middle-school age kids who were exposed to "Everyday Math" nonsense. This and other fads abandon "drill and kill" memorization techniques for fuzzy "critical thinking" methods that put the cart of "why" in front of the horse of "how." In other words: Instead of doing the grunt work of hammering times tables and basic functions into kids' heads first, the faddists have turned to wacky, wordy non-math alternatives to encourage "conceptual" understanding — without any mastery of the fundamentals of math.

Common Core is rotten to the core. The corruption of math education is just the beginning

Respectfully submitted,

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